



JAPAN-AMERICA
SOCIETY OF HAWAII

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**FIRST 20 JAPANESE STUDENTS SELECTED FOR “RAINBOW FOR JAPAN KIDS”
PROJECT**

Honolulu –The Japan-America Society of Hawaii (JASH) is pleased to announce that the first 20 Japanese students who will come to Hawaii for the “Rainbow for Japan Kids” project have been selected. The children come from Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures, the three hardest hit areas of Japan during the tragic March 11 earthquake and tsunami. This is the first of a number of planned visits by Japanese children from the affected regions. JASH hopes to conduct three or more visits a year, each timed to occur during a school recess or holiday, as donations allow.

Bikki no Kai, a Miyagi-based non-profit organization who teamed with JASH and its Hawaii partners, notified the Hawaii project committee of the selection. The children were selected based on their current status and an assessment of an essay each wrote. The group consists of 15 girls and five boys, ages 13-15. Although none of the initial group of children lost parents, many have lost grandparents, other relatives or friends. All of the students from Iwate and Miyagi have lost their homes and are either in evacuation centers or living with relatives or friends while attending other schools.

The 20 children, and several Bikki no Kai chaperones, are scheduled to arrive in Honolulu on July 27th for a 10 day stay. The “Rainbow for Japan Kids” project was not designed to be a sightseeing tour or home-stay program. Instead, it is structured as an educational and cultural learning experience. The group will visit the YMCA’s Camp Erdman on Oahu’s North Shore for team activities and hiking, as well as Kualoa Ranch for outdoor activities. Several days will also be spent on Hawaii’s Big Island visiting a coffee plantation and experiencing a traditional Hawaii cultural center. The group will be staying at Volcano National Park’s Kilauea Military Camp.

The Hawaii group has teamed with the Kids Hurt Too program, which specializes in working with children who have lost parents or suffered other trauma, to provide psychological counseling and support to the children. Counselors from the program will accompany the students throughout the visit and will follow up on their condition once they return to Japan.

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JASH President Ed Hawkins visited the affected region earlier this month with Hawaii’s project committee members Ryoichi Okubo of JAL Hawaii and Hiro Ito of Kids Hurt Too to view the devastation firsthand and to meet with Bikki no Kai members. The Hawaii group toured Ishinomaki City, one of the heaviest-hit port cities, and stopped at the school where one of the selected children took refuge. The student spent two days on the upper floor without food, not knowing the whereabouts of her parents. Fortunately, they found one another on the third day in a touching reunion, when the child heard her parents calling out her name. “These are the kids we want to provide some respite from their ordeal and give them new dreams for a positive future,” Hawkins said.

Those interested in supporting the “Rainbow for Japan Kids” program can donate directly to JASH on its website or send donations to P.O. Box 1412, Honolulu, HI 96806. More information on this program can be found on JASH’s website at www.jashawaii.org, or by calling (808) 524-4450.

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